

## Beat the Heat

The weather is beautiful, the sun is shining and it is HOT, but are you aware of the dangers? Heat illnesses affect many people every year. Typically, about 240 people in the United States die from heat illnesses each year, according to the National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. During heat waves, that number has risen to as high as 1,700.

# HOT HOT HOT

**Heat Illness-** disabling complications of excessive heat stress

**Dehydration-** a process that results in below normal levels of fluid in the body that occurs when the amount of body fluid that is lost is greater than the amount of fluid that is replaced



- Avoid drinks that contain carbonation, caffeine or alcohol. These substances delay the absorption of fluids or increase the urine production leading to dehydration
- Do not rely on thirst. Thirst sensation does not occur until you are already slightly dehydrated



Although everyone is susceptible to heat illness it effects people differently. Physically fit, acclimatized, well hydrated people are more heat tolerant while the elderly and children are more likely to suffer from heat illness. Remember, dehydration does not only occur when you are exercising in the heat. You can become dehydrated when doing other things such as spending a day at the beach, working in the yard, visiting a theme park or any other activity the requires prolonged exposure to heat.

Bibliography

**Rehydration-** the process of replacing fluids within the body

To prevent heat illness, replace fluids lost by sweating as soon as possible, and be aware of warning signs. These are the three main types of heat illness, their symptoms and how to treat them:



**Heat cramps:** painful spasms of the skeletal muscle caused by dehydration. Prevented by proper prehydration and relieved with gentle stretching, ice and increased fluid consumption.

**Heat Exhaustion:** most common, caused by decreased blood volume due to dehydration. Characterized by: dizziness, headache, nausea, profuse sweating, cool/ clammy skin, rapid /weak pulse, body temperature at or slightly below normal. Treatment: remove from hot environment, cool as rapidly as possible.

[http://www.fda.gov/fdac/features/1997/597\\_heat.html](http://www.fda.gov/fdac/features/1997/597_heat.html)

<http://www.kidshealth.org/parent/firstaid/heat.html>

<http://www.healthanswers.com/data/base/ami/converted/000056.html>

[http://www.parenthoodweb.com/parent\\_cfmfiles/pros.cfm/505](http://www.parenthoodweb.com/parent_cfmfiles/pros.cfm/505)

**Heat Stroke:** the least common but most serious, even fatal. Caused by 1) the body's cooling system has completely shut off or 2) blood volume is so low that the person stops sweating and goes into shock. Characterized by: disorientation, unconsciousness, no sweating, hot/ dry skin, increased body temperature, rapid/ strong pulse. Treatment: rapid cooling, immediate transportation to the hospital.

Here are some tips on how to reduce the likelihood of becoming dehydrated:

- Drink fluids before, during and after exercise or prolonged heat exposure
- Check the color of your urine to see if fluid intake is adequate. Clear/ light colored urine indicates proper hydration

